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THE REAL KNOWLEDGE OF A FOREIGN COUNTRY (*Concluded*)

By LILIAN L. STROEBE

ART

IT MAKES a very pleasant change in the course of study to turn from the more theoretical subjects, like education and administration, to something which appeals to the artistic sense of the students and ten or twelve hours may well be devoted to the study of art. This study of the art of the foreign country does not mean theoretical investigations into the principles of artistic reproduction, but is to give the students a knowledge and appreciation of a limited number of paintings, perhaps only two or three works of each of the most important artists. Emphasis should be laid on pictures which convey a strong impression of the life and landscape of the country to which they belong. Very likely students will need some training to learn how to look at pictures. There are quite a number of people who have never had any courses in art and to whom art is an entirely new revelation. Those students are in some ways much more satisfactory in class than those who have been taught in their courses in art to criticise, rather than to look at pictures. Of course, art criticism has no place in our work, however it is very interesting to *hear* the students give the reasons why they like one picture better than another. Describing pictures is an excellent practice in the correct use of the foreign idiom, and it is quite worth while to make the students give a regular little talk which they have to prepare carefully for the recitation. As the subject is before them and as they do not have to spend much time on collecting material they can concentrate their energy on the language and can describe in detail what they have before their eyes. Technical terms are not necessary, but it is well to begin with pictures which contain action, as it is much easier to describe action than to describe the mood of a landscape or the expression of a face.

As in other subjects students need books of reference. Besides those already mentioned in the introduction it is very helpful to

have an illustrated history of art to be used for special reference. The collection of general histories of art, *Art in France*, *Art in Germany*, *Art in Spain*, published by Scribner in their respective countries in the language of the country, can be recommended highly for the purpose. These books deal with the whole field, architecture, painting, sculpture and the minor arts and contain small but valuable illustrations and a good bibliography. Excellent short monographs with good illustrations are easily accessible in French and German. To mention a few collections: *Les Grands Artistes* (Paris, Librairie Renouard, Henry Laurens editeur), *Künstler-Monographien*, edited by Knackfuss (Velhagen and Klasing, Bielefeld and Leipzig). It is harder to find such books in Spanish, as the other nations seem to have appreciated Spanish art more and written a great deal more about it than the Spaniards themselves. However, the collection *Los grandes Pintores Españoles Contemporaneos*, Biblioteca del Arte Español (Sociedad Española de Librería, Madrid) contains a few valuable monographs; also the essay of Juan de la Encina, *El Arte del Ignacio Zuloaga* can be recommended. The collection *El Arte en España* has already been mentioned in connection with the study of the geography of Spain.

All these monographs are very desirable and stimulating for the instruction in art, but it is absolutely indispensable to have a well chosen collection of reproductions of all those pictures which are to be discussed in class. The art departments very often use lantern slides for their work, but I am convinced that good reproductions of pictures, not too small (not postcards), are more satisfactory for our purpose. Students must have access to the picture for their preparation and during the recitation there ought to be a possibility of having more than one picture before the students' eyes, in order to compare them. The German art publishing houses have issued a large number of reproductions of pictures by French, German and Spanish artists. The coloured reproductions of Seeman (Leipzig, price 30 cents) serve our purposes very well, and the German periodical *Die Jugend* has beautiful coloured reproductions of the works of French, German and Spanish artists, which can be bought separately at about 50 cents. They very recently issued a large illustrated catalogue containing several thousand reproductions from which pictures can easily be chosen: *Katalog der*

farbigen Kunstblätter der Münchner Jugend (München 1919, Jugend Verlag).

Though the chief object of the study of art in our course is to become acquainted with, to describe and to remember the great works of art, the idea of development and historic evolution is not to be left out entirely and each artist should be studied in connection with his surroundings and his period. The very shortest outline of the development of art in the foreign country might be given as an introduction by the instructor. As to the choice of pictures, there is in each country such a wide field and such a large number of treasures, that the personal element of selection and emphasis must play a very large part.

France is possibly the most important country in the history of modern art, but it is only in the seventeenth century that France began to have a national art of its own. I do not think that it would be too late to begin the study of French art with Watteau. He gave the most subtle expression to the Parisian spirit in the Rococo period. His *Fête Champêtre*, *Fête Galante*, *Rendez-vous de chasse*, show the elegant life in the time of Louis the Fourteenth. Of the transition period between the Rococo and the classical revival, Madame Vigée-Lebrun's portrait of herself and her daughter is a most charming example. The new classical art shows at its best in the works of David. His most famous pictures, however, take their subject from classical history and are therefore less interesting for our purposes, but his *Coronation of Napoleon I* and his *Death of Marat* will offer a good opportunity for a short review of history. Some of his portraits, for instance *Madame Récamier*, might also be studied. Of the romantic school Ingre's *Maid of Orleans* is very interesting. Then one might choose some of Meissonier's paintings, representing sentimental stories and incidents of daily life. Meissonier's *Reading at Diderot's* will remind the students of what they have learnt in their courses on French literature. The second half of the nineteenth century in France gave rise to the new realistic impressionistic school and their "plein air" painting has influenced that of all other countries. Courbet's *Stone breakers* and *Funeral at Ornans* and Millet's pictures of peasant life have already been mentioned in connection with the study of geography. Bastien-Lepage treats similar objects. The students are already familiar with some of the impressionistic landscapes and views of

cities by Pissaro, Cézanne, Monet and Manet, and they might study some more of them now. Finally Puvis de Chavanne's *Scenes from the Life of Sainte-Geneviève* in the Pantheon should not be omitted, as the artist is well known in America as well as in France. Modern French sculpture has produced many beautiful works; special attention might be paid to Bartholomé's *Monument to the Dead* in the cemetery of Père-Lachaise in Paris or Rodin's *Monument to the Six Citizens* in Calais.

Let us now consider the possibilities in studying German art. Not until the time of the reformation do we find really national German art and the two greatest painters of that period, Dürer and Holbein, are well worth studying. Of Dürer's pictures one might choose *Ritter, Tod und Teufel*, *Hyronymus im Gehäus*, *Matthias Holzschuher*, *Karl der Grosse*; of Holbein his *Madonna*, *Bildnis des Kaufmanns Gysze*, *des Erasmus von Rotterdam*, etc. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Germany produced no great works of art; the Thirty Years' War had destroyed all intellectual life and a revival of German art did not take place until the beginning of the nineteenth century. As a representative of the classical school of painting at that time one might choose Schnorr von Carolsfeld, and his *Nibelungen Fresken* in the "Residenz" in München will interest the students as they know something of the subject of those drawings from their courses in German literature. The two greatest painters of the romantic school in the nineteenth century are Richter and Schwind. The subjects of their charming drawings and paintings are the German fairy tales and legends and quite a number of their pictures ought to be studied in class. Richter's *Am Berge*, *Kunst bringt Gunst*, *Weihnachten*, *Die Alte Käsefrau*, *Christnacht*, *Rübezahl*, *Genoveva*, and Schwind's *Hochzeitsreise*, *Morgenstunde*, *Die Waldkapelle*, *Wartburgfresken*, *Rübezahl*, all show excellent understanding for German life and German landscape and are easily understood by everybody. Rethel, another great German painter, lived at the same time, but he cannot be placed in any of the labelled groups of painters. He painted the frescos of the life of Charlemagne in the town hall in Aix-la-Chapelle and among his other pictures his *Der Tod als Freund* is most poetical and interesting. As in France, art in Germany grew more and more realistic in the nineteenth century. Painters like Defregger and Vautier give pictures of incidents from daily life.

Defregger paints the life of the Tirolese peasant in his *Vor dem Tanz, Der Salon-tioler, Abendruhe*. Vautier in his *Tanzpause, Am Markttag, Der Brautwerber, Die Tanzstunde*, etc. finds the subjects for his paintings among the peasants of the Black Forest. Life in the Black Forest has great attractions for the painters and one of the living artists, Hans Thoma, gives us interesting pictures of the life and the people of that region, and his *Mutter und Schwester des Malers* and his *Dorfgeiger* are certainly more realistic and truer to life than Vautier's paintings.

German art developed, following the lead of France, and the "plein air" style of painting found many followers in Germany. In the transition period Menzel and Leibl are the best representatives. Menzel's pictures of *Frederick the Great, Flötenkonzert, Tafelrunde in Sans-Souci* have already been mentioned in connection with the study of history. Now his *Eisenwalzwerk* might be studied and of Leibl's works his peasant pictures *Zeitungslesender Bauer, In der Kirche, In der Bauernstube, Am Spinnrocken* will convey a strong impression of his art. The modern "Secessionskunst" shows at its best in the works of Uhde. His most famous paintings show scenes from the Bible, but laid in modern times with modern German costumes. In his *Christnacht* we see the Christ-child in a German barn, Joseph is an old peasant. In the *Bergpredigt* we see German peasants returning from their work in the field crowding around Jesus listening to his words. The study of these and other pictures of the Uhde like *Komm, Herr Jesus sei unser Gast; Lasset die Kindlein zu mir kommen; Schwerer Gang*, etc. could well be accompanied by a reading of the German Bible in Luther's translation. At the same time with the realistic school there is a strong neo-romantic movement of which Böcklin, Stuck and Klinger are the greatest representatives. For the study in class Böcklin's *Toteninsel, Der Heilige Hain, Heimkehr, Das Schweigen im Walde*, will be found most stimulating.

The study of Spanish art is most interesting and satisfactory, as Spain has contributed largely to the world's masterpieces in past and present time. Though there are fewer books available on Spanish art in the Spanish language, there is no difficulty in finding good reproductions, as all the best classical and modern pictures can be found among the Seeman and Jugend Prints. One might begin the study of Spanish art in the seventeenth century

with Velasquez and among his famous portraits in the Prado his *Phillip IV on horseback*, *Prince Balthasar*, *The maids of honor*, might be taken up. In the latter picture we see Velasquez himself, standing at the easel looking at the scenes through a large mirror. Of Murillo, the other great painter of the seventeenth century, one might choose his *Streetboys eating melons*, *Children counting money* and his wonderful *Conceptio Immaculata*. The most important Spanish painter of the eighteenth century is Goya, but his realistic and sarcastic caricatures are not very suitable for class use. Of the painters of the nineteenth century Fortuny's *Vicaria* will be found interesting. It shows us a wedding in a Madrid church, the costumes are those of the time of Goya and we receive a clear impression of the artificiality of the rococo period. His *Pastimes of noblemen* and *Choosing a model* might also be taken up. The painter Pradilla belongs to the same time and his *Surrender of Granada* has already been mentioned in connection with the study of history. Of the contemporary Spanish painters, certainly Sorolla and Zuloaga ought to be studied, they are well known through their exhibitions in America and some of their pictures can be seen in the Hispanic Museum in New York and in other galleries. The students are already familiar with Sorolla's *Leonese peasants* and his pictures of *Scenes of Toledo*; one could now add some of his paintings which show the life in the Spanish seaside resorts. There is no painter nowadays who gives us a clearer idea of modern Spain than Zuloaga. Looking at his pictures we are deeply impressed with his austerity and his rigorous sense of reality. "In his canvasses can be studied, as nowhere, except from the originals themselves, those deep rooted racial factors which have molded into distinct types the seductive Andalusian, the aggressive Basque, the haughty Castilian, or the languorous and passionate Segovian." The students have already studied Zuloaga's paintings of Spanish landscapes and types; they might now study some of his family pictures, for instance, *Daniel Zuloaga and his family*, *My cousin Esperanza*, *My cousin Candida*, and others. The background of some of his portraits shows in the most impressive way the tawny hills of Castile and Arragon, the background of his picture of the French writer Barrès gives us another charming view of Toledo. The students certainly will be interested in Zuloaga's *Bullfight pictures* and portraits of *Famous Toreadors* and they certainly help us to an understanding of the national sport in Spain.

As in all other subjects, frequent short tests should be given, in order to be sure that the students really remember what they have seen and studied. A good and amusing test is to show pictures with which the students are familiar in rapid succession and have the students mention the name of the picture and the artist as quickly as possible. Or one student may give the title of a picture and another student describe it in one or two phrases, or one student describes in a few words the picture and the others mention the title and the name of the artist as soon as they recognize the picture. This is really a kind of a game and may seem rather juvenile, but according to my own experience the students will learn a larger amount and will enjoy the work when it is done in this informal way than if they have to listen to a lecture illustrated with lantern slides about certain painters and pictures.

After having gone over the whole subject, some longer talks and topics might be assigned as a review, for instance: Describe a visit in the Louvre, the Luxembourg, the National-Galerie, the Schack-Galerie, the Prado, etc. Your time is very limited and you can study only four or five pictures. Which pictures would you choose? Describe the pictures and give the reason for your choice.

Collect all the pictures you have been studying whose subject is natural scenery or cities or villages or peasant life or incidents of daily life and give a connected talk on that subject, referring constantly to the pictures.

Collect all works of painters and sculptors you have studied which depict the life of Joan of Arc. Tell the story of her life in chronological order, referring constantly to the paintings and sculptures.

Choose one artist you are particularly interested in. Give a very short outline of his life, select five of his best pictures, describe them and tell about the journey you would have to take in order to see the originals.

You are a High School teacher of French (German, Spanish) and somebody gives you a sum of money to buy French (German, Spanish) pictures for your class room. You can buy five or six pictures, describe them and give the reason for your choice. Tell us the size, the price, and how to procure them in this country.

CONCLUSION

There can be no doubt that such a course will enable students to start out on their teaching or travelling experience better equipped than if they had no systematic training at all. Of course the real, intimate knowledge of a foreign country can be acquired only by a residence abroad; the daily life, the human touch, the personal element will impress students only in the foreign land. But even in this country a good deal of preliminary work can be done toward this goal by reading modern novels, dramas, short stories. The every day life of the people, their ideals and their standards, will be learned and understood better by reading modern literature than by reading books about the foreign country. There are few books which can give us such an insight into the life of the foreign people as a well written novel or drama can do. To take an American example, a foreigner, who is interested in American colleges, will read a college catalogue, an educational report, a college magazine and he will find a great deal of valuable information in those publications, but in order to have a glimpse of the every day life of the student and the faculty he will find the reading of novels like "Philosophy Four," "Brown of Harvard," "The Torch," "The Law of Life," "When Patty Went to College," etc. far more helpful than formal reports. However there will be hardly time enough during the college year for such reading, as a great number of books have to be read to get the different phases of foreign life, but such reading could well be done during the summer vacation. And students like to read foreign novels, that I know from my own experience. Every year in June a number of students appear in my office and ask me to recommend books to them for summer reading and by a few casual remarks in the autumn I find out that they have read quite a number of the books recommended. It therefore seems to be a good plan for the instructor to compile a list of books, novels, short stories and dramas for each country, dealing with the different strata of society like the peasants, the workingman, the small shop keeper, the city or government employee, the artists, the officer, the big merchant and financier, the nobility, etc. Such a list of books need not be restricted to the great masterpieces of literature, quite the contrary; the popular novels of the day, easily understood by everybody, the "best sellers," if a sufficient number of them is read, will furnish the stu-

dents with just what they need and they will find the man amusing recreation. Such a list of books, dealing with the different phases of modern German life, can be found in *THE MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL*, May, 1919, and it is to be hoped that instructors in the Romance languages will soon contribute a similar list of books for their field.

Finally, if it is asked what place such a course has in the college curriculum, I wish to state that, if well conducted, the course is by no means only informational, but that it offers an opportunity for the training of the mind as effectively as do courses in literature, economics, and the like. We demand that a student in his college career should learn how to think and how to use his mind, that he should gather valuable information and should know how to find information he does not possess, and that he should, without being trained to be a specialist, have a good general background of culture and education. Certainly all these points can be gained in a course on the life and the conditions of a foreign country. In addition to the training in the fluent and idiomatic use of the foreign language, the students, in giving reports about their reading, have to learn how to arrange the material, how to choose the most important points and how to present them in such a way that other people can understand them. Whatever has been learned is used immediately, and the best way of using information about a foreign country and of showing that it really has been understood, is by a comparison with American conditions. In trying to make such comparisons, the instructor, to his astonishment, very often will find how very little information and knowledge students have about their own country and how very immature their judgments are. It is therefore important that such a course should not be offered too early, not before the Junior or Senior year, but if the students are mature enough, the discussions about the conditions and ideals of a foreign country will not only give them a great deal of valuable information, but will teach them to appreciate the institutions of their own country and it may even lead them to understand some defects in their own country in fields where other nations have done more.

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